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Childhood Obesity Prevention: What Do We Need and How Are We Doing? A European Perspective

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healthful energy balance behavior, we need insight in the ‘causes of the causes’, i.e. in why children and their parents eat too much and move too little. Energy balance-related behaviors (sufficient healthy physical activity, healthy eating, and less sedentary time) are a result of personal motivations and abilities, and contextual or environmental opportunities. It is not personal determinants or environmental opportunities that make a difference; it is mediation and interaction between and across these ‘causes of the causes’ that drive healthful behaviors. To effectively encourage and facilitate healthful energy balance behaviors, health promotion efforts (to improve motivation and abilities), as well as health protection efforts (to make the healthy choice the default choice) are needed. Such an integrated approach needs to be supported by participation of the main stakeholders in all phases of intervention and policy development, implementation and evaluation. Such integrated prevention approaches have and are being developed and tested across Europe. In this presentation the rationale, data, results, ongoing efforts for cross-European research will be presented - such as the European Commission funded ENERGY (European Energy-balance Research to prevent excessive weight Gain among Youth), and SPOTLIGHT (Sustainable prevention of obesity through integrated strategies) projects, as well as results from the European DEDIPAC (Determinants of DIet and Physical ACTivity knowledge hub) joint action.

S6.3

Childhood Obesity Prevention: What Do We Need and How Are We Doing? A European Perspective

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The worldwide prevalence of overweight and obesity has been steadily increasing, also among children and adolescents, and has reached alarming pandemic proportions in Europe and elsewhere. Childhood overweight is a main predictor of adult overweight and obesity. Obesity treatment is largely ineffective, and a still stronger focus on primary prevention is needed. Such prevention should take a population and a life course approach and should focus on promoting healthy energy balance-related behaviors rather than weight management or weight loss. To encourage and facilitate